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Information Technology Services Spring 2011

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February 2011

Dear Trinity Community,

Re: Information Technology Services (ITS) Update

The start of the spring semester brings thoughts of renewed beginnings and hope that the winter storms are soon a distant memory. There are lots of changes in the air and many more to come, but I want to take a moment to share some highlights of current initiatives.

As the new web-site is unveiled you will notice that we are transitioning away from being known as the Computer Center to Information Technology Services, which reflects our service-oriented focus.

Desktop Support and Helpdesk

Recognizing the need for greater support of the Macintosh platform we have begun sending our distributed computing specialists to Apple Training. The first to attend and get certified in repair is Jessica Tait, who joined the IT team in 2010 upon graduation from Trinity. The training enhances our depth of support and improves our ability to purchase parts directly from Apple improving turnaround time. In other Apple news, we now have Office 2011 available for the Mac. Contact the helpdesk (X2100) for details.

Winter Institute for Teaching with Technology (WITT)

Amid a small break in the wintery mix, over fifty faculty and staff members attended the WITT session "Teaching the Millennials" hosted by The Office of the Dean of Faculty, The Center for Teaching and Learning, The Social Science Center, The Library and Academic Computing. It was a wonderful event with a variety of faculty led presentations, student panels and engaging discussions. This was a true collaborative effort that was led by Instructional Technologist, Dave Tatem. Thanks to all who made this a resounding success.

Information Technology in Education Committee (ITEC)

Technology exploration is the central theme for the iPad initiative that is being sponsored this spring by the Information Technology in Education Committee (ITEC) and Information Technology Services (ITS). Twelve interested faculty members submitted proposals outlining their pedagogical goals with this new technology and were provided with tablet computers. At the end of the pilot in June, the recipients of the iPads will each submit a written report evaluating the effectiveness of the device. This will be followed-up with a workshop in which they will share their experiences with the Trinity Community, so everyone can benefit from the knowledge transfer.

Several of the proposals focused on presentation tools and etextbooks. Others focused on using the device as a virtual instrument, navigating historical maps and building floor plans for use on Paris walking tours for "Comparative World Cities", drag and drop sentence diagramming software, a community learning initiative, and student collaboration tool, and many other creative ideas. We hope this pilot will be a seed of inspiration for other faculty members to experiment with new technology.

The faculty that are participating in the pilot project are: Scott Smedley, Biology; Dave Henderson, Chemistry; Timothy Richards, Computer Science; Jack Dougherty, Educational Studies; Lucy Ferriss, English; Alden Gordon, Fine Arts, Eduardo Lage-Otero, LACS; Noah Sabich, LACS; Eric Galm, Music; Stefanie Chambers, Political Science and Ron Kiener, Religion.

Computer Lab Updates

During the winter break we took the opportunity to make some minor updates to the computers in our public labs. For the Windows computers: Windows updates were applied (including new virus definitions for Microsoft Forefront); Adobe Reader was upgraded from 9 to X and internet browser shortcuts were inserted in the Start Menu. For the Mac Computers we ran the Max OS X software updates and updated virus definitions for McAfee Security.

TAMBA File Sharing

Tamba, a file sharing system that is the predecessor to Sharepoint, is a central repository, used to store documents and images by many departments and individuals across campus. This past December TAMBA suffered two significant failures, which resulted in several days when files could not be accessed. Our Systems and Network group has turned this failure into an opportunity to improve the services. In early January, TAMBA file shares were migrated to our SAN (storage area network), improving service reliability and providing for greater flexibility.

Website

Supporting the efforts of the Communications Office, our web services team has continued to focus their energies on the technical aspects of the new website and Trinity Today, the successor to Trinity Exchange. They have been busy building the web parts for the slide shows, enabling RSS feeds from the Event Management System, designing the templates and building the Content Management System in Sharepoint 2010.

Faculty/Personal Web Pages

Wordpress is the tool that has been chosen as the supported software for building personal web pages. Many faculty members have been using the blogging features of Wordpress for some time, but this software can also be used to author web pages. We are working out the details of deployment and expect to have a plan in place by the end of the semester.

Wireless

Wireless coverage has been available for several years throughout our academic and residential spaces. We recognize that there are spots where the coverage isn't sufficient and continue to build towards ubiquitous coverage. Toward this end, we have recently enhanced the WiFi in the following academic locations: Austin Arts 131 and 132, Trinity Commons Dance Studios, LSC 3rd floor labs 311 and 325, LSC Basement Mace Lab, Wiggins Art Studio and William Memorial 3rd floor in Economics.

Student eBilling

We are very excited about partnering with the Comptroller's Office on a new student eBilling project, which will streamline the tuition billing and payment process. It will also make the college more environmentally friendly by eliminating the need to print and mail bills. The product selected, Nelnet, has a tight integration with Peoplesoft and provides a parent gateway so parents and guardians can view and pay bills online, providing the students grant access. Our goal is to have this in place for the fall 2011 bills, which are posted in July. The initial step of this initiative was enabling the viewing of student accounts through the PeopleSoft Self-Service which was completed mid-Fall 2010.

Wrap-Up

We are looking for opportunities to help better serve your technology needs on campus. So please help us by providing us feedback and talking with us about your experience with our service, your hardware and software needs. Please also remember to include us in any software investigations you may be considering, as we are eager to partner with you in providing tools that will streamline business processes and improve research, teaching and learning experiences. I can be reached at ext.2525 or email, Suzanne.Aber@trincoll.edu.

Sue Aber

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